

## Message Text

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11  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 /092 W

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R 121405Z SEP 76  
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6213  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 4358

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, KU  
SUBJ: PALESTINIAN THREAT TO KUWAIT  
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REF: KUWAIT 4246 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT RECENT GOK MOVES TO SQUELCH PUBLIC DEBATE ON ARAB ISSUES, INCLUDING PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, WERE MOTIVATED PARTLY BY DESIRE TO FORESTALL ANY POTENTIAL PALESTINIAN TROUBLEMAKING IN KUWAIT, RATHER THAN BY CURRENT POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOK LEADERS AND LARGE, HETEROGENEOUS PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY HERE. THESE MOVES HAVE NOT, OF COURSE, INSULATED KUWAIT FROM PRESSURES OR VIOLENCE BY PALESTINIANS UNHAPPY WITH GOK'S FAILURE TO TAKE THEIR SIDE ON ISSUE OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON, BUT GOK MOVES MAY DECREASE LIKELIHOOD OF DISTURBANCES. WE NOTE ALSO THAT PLO LEADERS STILL APPEAR CHUMMY WITH GOK. THERE ARE RISKS THAT PALESTINIAN RADICALS IN KUWAIT MAY GO UNDERGROUND (WITH OR WITHOUT THEIR KUWAITI COUNTERPARTS) AND ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE, BUT THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES WHICH GOK PROVIDES BOTH TO RESIDENT PALESTINIANS AND TO THE REGIONAL PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO DISCOURAGE PALESTINIAN INTEREST IN DESTABILIZING KUWAIT. END SUMMARY.

2. ISSUE 33 OF CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS, DATED SEPT 2, CONTAINS ARTICLE ENTITLED "KUWAIT ABANDONS DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS" WHICH WE BELIEVE OVERSTATES SOMEWHAT BOTH THE "DIFFERENCES" BETWEEN GOK AND THE PALESTINIAN MINORITY HERE AND THE INCREASE IN POTENTIAL FOR PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE IN KUWAIT. WE BELIEVE THAT, TO THE EXTENT AMIR'S MOVES WERE MOTIVATED BY GOAL OF FORESTALLING ANY POTENTIAL PALESTINIAN TROUBLEMAKING, GOK WAS CONCERNED THAT PUBLIC DEBATE IN KUWAIT, ESPECIALLY ON THE SYRIAN-PLO SPLIT AND INCREASINGLY ON ISSUES PROMOTED BY LIBYA, WOULD EXCITE RESIDENT PALESTINIANS AND WOULD POLARIZE KUWAITI OPINION ON PALESTINIAN ISSUES.

3. WE HAVE NOT YET CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT AMIR ACTED OUT OF CONCERN WITH ANY CURRENT POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KUWAITI "RULERS AND KUWAIT'S LARGE PALESTINIAN MINORITY" (PARA 3, CFR ARTICLE). THERE ARE THREE POINTS TO BE MADE HERE:

A. THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN KUWAIT IS NOT A MONOLITH,  
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AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR LAWLESSNESS REALLY HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH THE SIZE OF THE COMMUNITY. OVER 70 PERCENT OF RESIDENT PALESTINIANS ARE ESTIMATED TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE GOK. PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN AND MERCHANTS MAKE UP THE BULK OF THE REST, WITH THE PERCENTAGE OF RADICALS AMONG THEM HIGHEST AMONG THE YOUNG AND THE INTELLECTUALS. FIVE PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS (OR FIVE IRAQIS OR FIVE AMERICANS) COULD, IF DETERMINED TO DO SO, INFLICT SERIOUS

DAMAGE IN KUWAIT AND THEY NEED NOT BE REPRESENTATIVE OF ANY POLITICAL GROUP BEYOND THEMSELVES. KUWAITI OFFICIALS AND INSTALLATIONS ARE NO MORE AND NO LESS VULNERABLE TODAY THAN A YEAR AGO.

B. NOR HAVE THE KUWAITIS MEASURABLY INCREASED INTERNAL SECURITY BY SHUTTING DOWN THE POLITICAL AND MEDIA INSTITUTIONS WHICH MADE KUWAIT VULNERABLE AS A SITE FOR THE PLAYING OUT OF INTER-ARAB RIVALRIES. BUT THE GOK HAS PROBABLY REDUCED THE POSSIBILITIES OF PALESTINIAN, LIBYAN, IRAQI, SYRIAN, EGYPTIAN, SAUDI AND PERHAPS OTHER GOVERNMENTS' REPRESENTATIVES FINANCING POLITICAL GROUPS OR NEWSPAPERS FRIENDLY TO THEM, AS WELL AS THE CHANCE OF DISTURBANCES GROWING OUT OF SUCH ACTIVITIES OR OTHER MANIPULATION OF KUWAIT'S DESTINY.

C. KUWAIT'S RELATIONS WITH ITS PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN MANAGED DELICATELY AND CAREFULLY AND, AS LONG AS THE GENERAL PATTERN OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE PLO WAS FOLLOWED BY MOST ARAB COUNTRIES, KUWAIT ENCOUNTERED NO REAL PROBLEMS WITH ITS LARGE PALESTINIAN MINORITY. BUT THEN SYRIA TOOK HOSTILE ACTION AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS; JORDAN SECONDED IT; AND SAUDI ARABIA REMAINED, IN THE MAIN, BEHIND SYRIA. DESPITE HEAVY PRESSURE FROM THE KUWAITI PRESS AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THE GOK REFUSED TO TAKE A FORMAL POSITION SUPPORTING THE PLO AGAINST SYRIA, A REFUSAL WHICH WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED AS SANCTIONING SYRIAN ACTIONS. THIS BECAME AN EMBARRASSMENT TO KUWAIT AND WAS BEGINNING TO COMPLICATE SOMEWHAT ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS LARGE ARAB NEIGHBORS. WAS THERE MEANINGFUL "DIFFERENCE" BETWEEN THE GOK AND KUWAIT'S LARGE PALESTINIAN MINORITY? WHILE POLITICAL ELEMENTS AMONG KUWAIT'S LARGE PALESTINIAN MINORITY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED GOK TO TAKE  
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AN OPEN STAND AGAINST SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON, THE GOK'S CAREFUL AVOIDANCE OF PARTISAN STATEMENTS ON ANY SIDE OF THAT COMPLEX DISPUTE, AND THE VERY REAL BENEFITS KUWAIT AFFORDS TO PALESTINIANS OF MANY POLITICAL COLORATIONS, APPARENTLY HAS SO FAR RENDERED THIS POLICY "DIFFERENCE" TOLERABLE TO PALESTINIAN LEADERS. SIGNIFICANTLY, PLO AND OTHER PALESTINIAN LEADERS HAVE CONTINUED TO VISIT THE COUNTRY, TO CONSULT WITH TOP GOK MINISTERS, AND TO GO AWAY APPARENTLY SATISFIED.

4. ADDITIONAL POINT MADE IN SAME PARAGRAPH OF CFR IS THAT "ANY (PALESTINIAN) TROUBLEMAKER WILL BE SUMMARILY DEALT WITH BY EXPULSION." IN FACT, THIS HAS BEEN THE GOK PRACTICE FOR YEARS; THE KUWAITIS GET AWAY WITH IT BECAUSE KUWAIT OFFERS OTHER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE

PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT WHICH OUTWEIGH POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES  
TO BE GAINED FROM THEIR MAKING TROUBLE HERE.

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AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KUWAIT 4358

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

5. REGARDING PARA 4 OF ARTICLE, WE AGREE THAT "SEEDS

OF INSTABILITY" COULD BE EMBEDDED IN AMIR'S ACTIONS,  
SINCE THERE IS RISK THAT BOTH KUWAITI AND PALESTINIAN  
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LEFTISTS WILL GO UNDERGROUND. AS WE SEE IT, HOWEVER,  
THE GOK CAN AND WILL CONTINUE TO FURNISH PALESTINIAN  
MOVEMENT SUBSTANTIAL ADVANTAGES (FINANCIAL SUPPORT,  
SAFEHAVEN, POLITICAL SUPPORT IN ARAB WORLD, AND EVEN SOME  
JOBS IN KUWAIT) WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO DAMP DOWN ANY  
PALESTINIAN INTEREST IN DESTABILIZING KUWAIT. WE ALSO  
AGREE WITH ARTICLE TO EFFECT THAT PALESTINIANS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF NET ADVANTAGE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH KUWAIT WOULD  
CHANGE IF GOK BEGAN AN "OVERALL CRACKDOWN." BUT WE DO  
NOT THINK BROAD CRACKDOWN WILL COME IN ABSENCE OF MAJOR  
PALESTINIAN PROVOCATION, SINCE GOK ALSO RECOGNIZES RISK  
INVOLVED. RATHER, THERE ARE RECENT INDICATIONS THAT GOK  
MAY USE "CARROT" ON RESIDENT PALESTINIANS--RECENT NEWS  
REPORTS INDICATE GOK MAY BE CONSIDERING INTERNAL POLICY  
CHANGES WHICH WOULD INCREASE SALARIES OF ALIEN RESIDENTS,  
GRANT NATIONALITY TO MORE OF THEM THAN IN THE PAST, AND  
PERHAPS IMPROVE THEIR ACCESS TO BENEFITS OF KUWAITI WELFARE  
STATE.

6. IN NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE ARTICLE DATED  
WASHINGTON SEPT 1, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS "SPECIALIZING  
IN ARAB AFFAIRS" ARE REPORTED AS HAVING CONVEYED IDEAS  
SIMILAR TO SOME OF THOSE IN CFR ARTICLES. IMPRESSION GIVEN  
OF URGENT KUWAITI NEED TO "CONTROL THE LARGE PALESTINIAN  
COMMUNITY," ABOUT TO BE SWELLED BY "NEW WAVE OF REFUGEES,"  
EVEN THOUGH KUWAITI-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS "EXACERBATED"  
RECENTLY AND "GROWING NUMBER OF KUWAITIS ARE VOICING  
SUPPORT FOR RADICAL PALESTINIAN CAUSES." AGAIN, EMBASSY  
BELIEVES THAT, IF DEPARTMENT OR OTHER SPOKESMEN WERE  
QUOTED ACCURATELY, THIS IS OVERSTATEMENT BOTH OF DIFFERENCES  
BETWEEN GOK AND RESIDENT PALESTINIANS AND OF INCREASE IN  
THREAT OF PALESTINIAN UNREST HERE. OBVIOUSLY, GIVEN AN  
APPROPRIATE SET OF OCCURRENCES OR CIRCUMSTANCES, THINGS  
COULD CHANGE. IN SUCH A CASE, GOK WOULD PRESUMABLY BE  
SOMEWHAT BETTER PREPARED TO REACT, AS RESULT OF PREVENTIVE  
ACTIONS TAKEN BY RECENT DECREES.  
MAESTRONE

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## Message Attributes

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**Draft Date:** 12 SEP 1976  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, KU  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006